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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 CONAKRY 000219

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SUBJECT: THE CALL FROM KALOUM: A NEW RALLYING CRY FOR DADIS

REF: CONAKRY 0195

1.(SBU) SUMMARY. PolEcon Chief met with the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a senior career diplomat and discussed the current political situation in Guinea, pressing the need for elections and a return to a semblance of rule of law. Both officials consistently defended the CNDD, asked for recognition of "the good things the CNDD has done," and saw no problem with CNDD President Moussa Dadis Camara running for President. A speech by the Minister of Foreign Affairs attended by the Charge later in the day also alluded to the possibility of Dadis' candidacy.
END SUMMARY.

IF HE'S ELECTED,SO WHAT?

2.(SBU) PolEcon Chief and PolOff met with the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Balamoussa Camara, and the Director of International Organizations, Ambassador Nhur Mohamed Kamara, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on April 20. PolEcon Chief delivered a demarche (septel), and then took the opportunity to engage both officials in a frank discussion about the U.S. position towards the current administration.

13. (SBU) Both senior career diplomats were eager to talk and appeared to enjoy the exchange of ideas, despite very few points of concurrence. Ambassador Nhur is a well known to the Embassy and formerly headed the American Affairs office. Secretary General Camara was appointed just one month before the coup d'etat. Both men steadfastly defended the CNDD's position on a variety of issues. When asked about the elections, they stated that it is impossible to have elections too quickly and subtly indicated that they would support the CNDD President, Moussa Dadis Camara, should he decide to "hang up his uniform and run for President," as Dadis reportedly threatened to do last week. "If the people choose to elect him, what is the problem?" they asked perplexedly. PolEcon Chief maintained that an election won by the person who organized them after illegally seizing power would be unacceptable to the USG.

ZERO TOLERANCE

14. (SBU) When PolEcon Chief stated that the U.S. maintains a zero tolerance policy towards coup d'etats, the two men remained silent. Both officials had settled back into the cracked plastic sofas, but Ambassador Nhur became quite animated after, leaning forward in an attempt to persuade. He insisted that the U.S. "must recognize the positive things that the CNDD is doing." When PolEcon Chief stated that the CNDD was an illegitimate government and that until elections were held there would be no change in the United States' position, the men appeared disheartened.

15. (SBU) Located in a run-down, dingy office building, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is a bleak environment. The offices are dark and heavy and there is a general sense of deterioration and isolation. When asked about the extra-judiciary Office of Conflicts operating in Camp Alpha Yaya (septel), there was no comment or recognition, nor was there a response when it was pointed out that this extra-judiciary body had reportedly overturned a Supreme Court case. PolEcon Chief pointed out that human rights and the rule of law are imperiled when military officers, untrained in judicial proceedings, install themselves as judges and hand down rulings at random. Ambassador Nuhr and the Secretary General defended the Dadis Show -- where government officials, drug dealers and senior mining executives -- are interrogated by Captain Dadis on national television saying, "no one has been sentenced to jail on televisions -- they are handed over for trial."

AN AFRICAN SOLUTION

16. (SBU) The same day, the diplomatic corps, heads of missions, and international agencies were summoned to the Ministry. In a prepared speech the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alexandre Cece Loua, reassured the diplomats that the CNDD is dedicated to holding free and transparent elections, but will need their financial assistance. At the end of the speech he referred to the "call from Kaloum," the neighborhood where Dadis recently held a large rally and reportedly declared that as the other political parties were not prepared to run the country, and if opposition leaders

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continued to disrespect him, then he might have to "hang up his uniform and run" (reftel). When asked by the German Ambassador if Dadis would run for election, the Minister enigmatically replied that that "is an African question and it will have an African response."

COMMENT

17. (SBU) It appears that increasingly Dadis may be preparing to run for president. Local press reports have mentioned "panic and despair among Guineans" who previously believed Dadis would step down as promised. At the same time, these senior MFA officials did not seem to see any problem with Dadis' potential candidacy. They appeared passionately supportive of the CNDD and were adamant that the USG needs to adapt its policy position to accommodate Guinea's "unique situation." They gave the impression that the USG's position is naive and does not accurately reflect the reality on the ground.
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